

Lao Tse

Tao Te Ching

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The book *Tao Te Ching* was written by the great Chinese spiritual adept Lao Tse about 2500 years ago. In that incarnation, Lao Tse was a disciple of non-incarnate Huang Di¹ and achieved full spiritual self-realization. At the present time, Lao Tse provides spiritual help to incarnate people.

The work on creating this edition of *Tao Te Ching* was done at the personal request of Lao Tse² and with His help.

Tao Te Ching is one of the most fundamental textbooks on the philosophy and methodology of spiritual development.

¹ One can find more details in the book *Classics of Spiritual Philosophy* under the editorship of Dr. Vladimir Antonov.

² In this request He added that a competent translation of *Tao Te Ching* could only be made by a person who has traversed the entire Path to the cognition of Tao.

TAO TE CHING

1. One cannot cognize Tao³ only by speaking about It.

One cannot name by a human name that Origin of the sky and the earth Which is the Mother of everything.

Only those who are free from worldly passions can see It, and those who have such passions can see only Its Creation.

Tao and Its Creation are One in essence, though are called by different names. The passage which exists between them is a doorway to all the miraculous.

2. When people know beauty, they also understand what is ugly.

When people learn what is good, they also realize what is evil.

In this way, beingness and non-beingness, hard and easy, long and short, high and low allow knowing each other.

Different sounds mix and create harmony. And so the preceding and the succeeding follow each other harmoniously.

The wise prefer *non-doing*⁴ and live in *quietness*⁵. Everything happens around them as if by itself. They are

³ Synonyms of this word of Chinese origin are Primordial Consciousness, Creator, God-the-Father, Ishvara, Allah, Svarg, etc.

⁴ That is the calm of mind and body, including stopping of the flow of thoughts. It allows mastering the art of meditation and developing oneself as a consciousness. (Those who are not used to the word *non-doing* can mentally replace it with the word *meditation* when reading this text).

not attached to anything on the Earth. They do not own anything made by them. They are not proud of their works.

Since they do not exalt themselves, do not boast, do not require special respect from others, they are pleasant to all.

3. If the chosen are not exalted, no one envies them. If material treasures are not praised, no one steals them. In other words, if the objects of passions are not shown off, there are no temptations.

The wise ruler does not create such temptations for people but takes care that people have enough food. This eliminates passions and strengthens people's health. The wise ruler always strives to prevent temptations and passions and does not let evil people act.

The absence of these problems brings calm.

4. Tao looks like a void. Yet, It is omnipotent!

It is in the *Depths*.⁶

It is the Origin of everything.

It controls everything.

It pervades everything.

It shines with *Light*.

It is the *Subtlest!*

It is the Main Essence of everything!

One cannot describe Its origin, for It is Primordial.

⁵ Here Lao Tse means *inner quietness*, which is called *hesychia* in Greek. Hesychasm, an ancient tradition of the Christian mysticism, is named after it (see [5,6]).

⁶ In the depths of multidimensional space. In other words, at the *subtle* end of the multidimensional scale.

5. Matter – both in the sky and on the earth – is dispassionate towards all creatures, be they plants, animals, or people, however, it is the base of all of them.

In the same way, the wise are dispassionate towards others.

The space above the earth is void and free like the space inside a bellows or a flute. The more space there is for action, the more efficient the action can be.

The one who interferes with the actions of others and talks too much becomes unbearable for people.

Therefore, it is always better to follow the principle of non-interference and keep inner calm.

6. The life and development of the *Subtlest*⁷ are eternal and infinite.

It is the *Deepest Base* of everything.

On It the material world exists.

It acts without violence.

7. The sky and the earth are lasting. They last long because they exist not on themselves and *not for the sake of themselves*, they are created by Tao and exist *for It*.

The wise place themselves behind others and thus do not hinder other people and can lead them. The wise do not treasure the lives of their bodies, but their lives are guarded by Tao.

This happens because the wise exist here *not for the sake of themselves*. This is why their personal needs get realized *for them*.

The wise exist *for Tao* and serve It.

⁷ Tao.

8. The wise live like water. Water serves all beings and does not require anything for itself. It exists below all things. In this respect, it is similar to Tao.

Life has to follow the principle of naturalness.

Follow the *Path of the heart!* Be friendly!

Tell only the truth!

When guiding others, follow the principle of being calm!

Every action has to be realizable and done in time.

The one who does not strive to be ahead of others can avoid many mistakes.

9. One should not pour water into a full vessel. And there is no sense in sharpening an edge too much. And if a room is overfilled with gold and jasper, who will guard it?

Excessiveness in everything causes troubles.

When the work is finished, one should retire.

Such are the laws of harmony suggested by Tao.

10. In order to maintain calm, one has to feel *Unity with Everything*⁸. Then one does not develop false ego-centric desires.

One has to refine the consciousness. Let **one**, in this **respect**, become similar to a newborn baby. The one who becomes so subtle becomes free from delusions.⁹

One has to rule the country and the people with love for them and without violence.

The gate from the world of matter to the hidden world is open when one stays in calm. Understanding of this truth comes in *non-doing*.

⁸ To feel oneself an integral part of the Absolute.

⁹ Only through this can one cognize Tao.

To educate without violence, to create without boasting, to produce without possessing the products, to be older than others and not command them, this is the true righteousness of Great Te¹⁰!

11. Thirty spokes are united in one wheel. But, the use of the wheel depends also on the space between the spokes.

Vessels are made of clay. Yet, their usefulness depends on the empty space inside them.

Buildings consist of walls, doors, windows. Yet, the building's usefulness depends also on the space in it.

This is the relation between the usefulness of objects and emptiness.

12. The one who sees only five colors in the world is like the blind.

The one who hears only the sounds of the material world is similar to the deaf.

The one who partakes of only material food and feels only its taste is deluded.

The one who, in pursuit of prey, races at full speed is insane.

By accumulating jewelry and adornments, people act to the detriment of themselves.

The efforts of the wise are directed at having enough food, not at accumulating many objects. They, satisfied with little in the world of matter, choose *the Primordial*.

13. Glory and disgrace are equally feared. Fame is a great distress in life.

¹⁰ I.e., the higher morality suggested by Te, by the Holy Spirit (Brahman).

What does it mean that glory and disgrace are equally feared? It means that people fight for glory and then fear to lose it.

And what does it mean that fame is a great distress in life? It means that I suffer great distress because I treasure my name.

When I cease treasuring my name, I will have no distress.

Thus, the wise do not seek praise from people. They just serve people self-sacrificingly, therefore, they can live among people in peace. They do not fight against anyone for something, therefore, they are invincible.

14. If you look at Tao, you cannot notice It immediately. This is why It is called hard-to-be-seen.

If you listen to Tao, you cannot hear It immediately. This is why It is called hard-to-be-heard.

If you try to grasp Tao, you cannot reach It. This is why It is called hard-to-be-caught.

In Tao are Those Who fill you with delight!¹¹ All Those in Tao are merged into *One*.

Tao is equal above and below.

Tao, infinite in size, cannot be called by the name of any *One* of Them.

They come out from Tao manifesting Their Individualities, then come back to the state without individual manifestations in It.

Tao has no corporeal image or face. This is why one regards It as hidden and mysterious.

¹¹ Holy Spirits Who come out from Tao and are coessential to It. In the Christian tradition, They are called, in the aggregate sense, the Holy Spirit.

Meeting Tao, I do not see Its face. Following Tao, I do not see Its back.

By strictly following the primordial Path of transformation of oneself as a consciousness, one can cognize the *Eternal Origin*. This Path is the Path to Tao.

15. Since ancient times, those capable of achieving spiritual Enlightenment cognized hidden and hardly cognizable small and large steps of this Path.

Such seekers were hard to recognize. Let me outline their appearance: they were cautious like a man crossing a river in winter, they were circumspect because they were wary of strangers, they were alert because they knew that one's time on the Earth is limited, they were watchful as if they walked on melting ice, they were simple, they were vast like a dale, they were hidden from idle looks.

They were those who, in calm, could transform dirty into pure.

They were those who contributed to the Evolution of Life.

They worshipped Tao and were satisfied with little in the world of matter. Not desiring much, they were satisfied with what they had and did not seek more.

16. Make *emptiness*¹² in yourself complete and achieve full calm! Let everything around you move by itself! Let everyone bloom spiritually and advance to cognition of their true Essence¹³!

¹² Here it means the meditative state Nirodhi. In this state, the individual "I" completely disappears, dissolving in Tao.

¹³ Atman, Higher Self, Tao.

Those who have cognized their true Essence achieve full calm. Thus they attain the common *Abode of All Those Who Have Attained*¹⁴.

One's presence in this *Abode* has to become constant. The One Who has fulfilled this goal is called Enlightened, Perfect, possessing the Higher Wisdom.

Those Who have attained that *Abode* represent the *United We*, which is the *Highest Ruler*. That *Abode* is also called *Heaven*¹⁵. This is the Abode of Eternal Tao.

Tao is non-corporeal. It cannot be caught by anyone. Thus, It is invincible.

17. The *Highest Ruler* provides all Its people with the possibility to develop the consciousness. But It does not seek to reward them with something worldly. It also does not try to make people fear It.

Those who believe foolishly do not know about this. But those who have cognized It do not believe foolishly any more.

This truth is so profound!

Having achieved success, I go further, and a greater understanding about *Everything* opens up to me.

18. If people in a country deny Great Tao, they begin to talk about 'humanism' and 'justice'... But in this situation, these talks are nothing more than hypocrisy!

In a similar way, when there is discord in the family, then there arise demands of "filial obedience" and "parental love"...

And when in a whole country there is such disarray, there appear slogans of "patriotism" and "love for the motherland"...

¹⁴ The Abode of the Creator.

¹⁵ Or Heavens.

19. When falsity and hypocrisy of this kind are removed, people are much happier. Falsity, aspiration to wealth, theft, and cruelty towards living beings disappear when people possess true knowledge. It is so because the reason for all people's vices is a lack of knowledge. It is knowledge that makes people understand that it is in their personal interest to be simple and kind, to control one's own worldly desires, and to liberate oneself from pernicious passions.

20. Cease to adhere to the objects to which you are attached, and you will be free from sorrow and self-pity! Only by living so can one find the true *Base*¹⁶ in life! Isn't this goal worthy of renouncing common beliefs and habits?

So great is the difference between good and evil!

Do not do anything undesired unto others. With this single principle, one can reduce chaos and establish order in society.

But now... all people indulge in vanity and society is immersed in chaos...

I alone stay calm and do not elevate myself over people. I am similar to a child who was not born in this world of vanity...

All people are bound by worldly desires. I alone have abandoned everything that they value. I am indifferent to this.

All people live in their egocentrism. I alone chose to get rid of it.

I flow as a Stream of Consciousness in Space and do not know when I will stop...

I cognize Tao *in my heart!* It is so *subtle!*

¹⁶ Tao.

I differ from others by valuing That Which created our lives.

21. Te comes out from Tao. And Tao abides in the *Primordial Depths*.

Te is That Which acts and drives. It is as mysterious and hidden as Tao. Yet, It also exists!

It can assume a form.

It possesses Power. Its Power is superior to everything existing in this world.

Te can be seen. From ancient times till present, the Voice of Te sounds and tells the Will of the Creator of the entire material world.

Where can I see the countenance of Te? Everywhere!

22. Being satisfied with little, you can gain much. Seeking much, you will go astray. The wise heed this precept. If it could only be so with all people!

The wise trust not only their physical eyes, thus they can see *clearly*.

The wise do not think that they alone are right, thus they know the truth.

They do not seek glory, yet people respect them.

They do not seek power, yet people follow them.

They do not fight against anyone, thus no one can vanquish them.

They do not feel pity for themselves, thus they can develop successfully.

Only those who do not seek to be ahead of others are capable of living in harmony with everyone.

The wise care about everyone, and thus they become an example to all.

They do not praise themselves, yet they are respectable.

They do not elevate themselves, yet they are esteemed by others.

In ancient times, people said that imperfect moves towards becoming perfect. Are these words vain? No! Truly, by achieving *Unity*, you come to Perfection!

23. Speak less and be simple!

Strong winds do not blow all morning. Strong rain does not continue all day long. What does this depend on? On the sky and the earth.

The sky and the earth, though large, cannot give birth to anything *eternal*. Neither can man. Therefore, it is better to serve *Eternal Tao*.

Those who serve Tao with their deeds receive the right to attain Mergence with It.

Those who have refined themselves¹⁷ to the state of Te become coessential to Te.

Those who have refined themselves to the state of Tao become coessential to Tao.

Those who are coessential to Te gain the bliss of Te.

Those who are coessential to Tao gain the bliss of Tao.

But the unworthy one is deprived of this possibility.

It is unwise to doubt this truth!

24. The one who stands on tiptoes cannot stand for long.

The one who walks with long strides cannot walk for long.

The one who is seen by everyone cannot keep power for long.

The one who praises oneself cannot win glory.

¹⁷ Refined the consciousness (soul).

The one who lives pitying oneself becomes weak and cannot develop.

The one who is envious cannot achieve success.

The one who praises oneself cannot gain prestige.

The one who indulges in gluttony does meaningless things and becomes irritated by everything, such a person cannot find peace.

Looking from Tao, one can see that all this is caused by vicious desires. All this is absurd behavior. Everyone turns away from such people.

On the contrary, the one who aspires to Mergence with Tao does not do anything like that.

25. Oh That Which was born before the sky and the earth were created, living in calm, having no form, the Subtlest, the Only Existing, Abiding everywhere, Boundless, Invincible, the Mother of everything! You are called Tao. I call You also the Greatest, That Which is eternal in Its infinite development!

Man, earth, and sky depend on Tao. But Tao exists by Itself.

26. Hard work allows one to achieve an easy life in the future.

Yet, we also know that calm is the main thing in movement.

Therefore, the wise work hard all day long and do not avoid hard work. Nevertheless, they stay in the state of perfect calm.

They can even live in luxury and do not get deprived by it.

Why is the owner of 10,000 chariots haughty and disdains the entire world? Disdain destroys the soul!

And the absence of calm leads to the loss of the *Base!...*

27. The one who knows the Path can find the right direction even if there is no treaded trail. The one who can speak does not make mistakes. The one who can count does not miscount. The best treasury has no lock, yet no one can open it. The best fetters are those which bind by nothing material, yet cannot be broken.

The wise can save people and save them constantly. The wise can help and do not leave anyone in trouble without help. Thus acts the deep wisdom!

The wise also instruct people of evil so that such people can find the *Base*.

But if people of evil do not value this help and do not like the *Base*, the wise leave them: the wise do not value relations with such people.

This principle is very important!

28. If you are brave, be humble! And then the entire nation will follow you.

If you become a leader among people, let Great Te be your Guide. And be a pure, gentle, and subtle soul, like a child!

Abiding in good, do not forget about the existence of evil! And be an example of righteousness for everyone!

The one who becomes such an example for everyone does not differ by the quality of the soul from Great Te and moves then to Mergence with Eternal Tao.

Such a person—though knowing about personal achievements and merits—stays unknown, and thus becomes a wise leader.

It is favorable that such a wise person be a leader among people; then there will be order in such a country.

29. Some people have a great desire to rule the entire world, and they try to succeed in this aspiration. I do not see how it can be possible, since the world is a con-

tainer of wonderful, invincible Tao! And no one can rule Tao!

The one who aspires to this will fail for sure!

Everyone has a choice: to oppose the harmonious flow of events or to follow it. The former struggle and lose strength, the latter bloom in harmony and strengthen.

The wise never aspire to power, surfeit, luxuries, prodigality.

30. A ruler faithful to Tao will not send an army to a foreign country. This would cause calamity to such a ruler in the first place.¹⁸

The land where an army has passed becomes desolate. After a war, lean years come.

A wise commander is never bellicose. A wise warrior never gets angry. The one who can defeat an enemy does not attack. The one who has achieved victory stops and does not do violence to the defeated enemies. The victorious do not praise themselves. They win but do not feel proud. They do not like to wage wars. They win because they are forced to fight. Though they win, they are not bellicose.

If man, in the prime of life, begins to weaken and gets ill, this happens only because of living in disharmony with Tao. The life of such a person ends before the due time.

31. Weapons are a means that cause affliction, they must be discarded.

Therefore, the one who follows Tao does not use weapons.

Good leaders are yielding. They use power for defense only. They exert every effort to maintain peace.

¹⁸ At least, according to the *law of karma*.

To glorify oneself with a military victory means to rejoice over killing people. Is it right to respect those who are glad about killing?

Respect leads to wellbeing. Wellbeing contributes to the creative process.

Violence leads to afflictions.

If many people are killed, it is a grievous event. The victory has to be “celebrated” with a funeral ceremony.

32. Tao is eternal and has no human appearance.

Though Tao is a tender Being, no one in the whole world can subjugate It.

If the nobility and rulers of a country lived in harmony with Tao, the common people would be peaceful and calm. The sky and the earth would unite in harmony, prosperity and wellbeing would come, people would quiet down without orders!

For the sake of establishing order in a country, laws are created. Yet, the laws must not be too severe.

Tao is like the ocean. The ocean is lower than all rivers, yet all rivers flow into it.

33. The one who knows people is reasonable. The one who has cognized oneself is enlightened.¹⁹ The one who can conquer enemies is strong. The one who has conquered oneself²⁰ is powerful.

The one who has material wealth is rich. The one who acts resolutely possesses willpower. The one who indulges one’s own desires is weak and foolish.

¹⁹ I.e., the one who has cognized one’s own multidimensional organism.

²⁰ I.e., the one who has conquered one’s own vices, including their base (the lower self with its egocentrism).

The one who attains Mergence with Tao and does not lose it also attains the Highest Beingness. After the death of the body, such a person continues to live in Tao as truly Immortal.

34. The Eternal Tao pervades everything. It is present to the left and to the right. Thanks to It, souls arise, live, and develop.

Though Tao is so Great and performs so great work, It does not seek to glorify Itself.

It raises all beings with love. It does not exert violence over them. It does not insist that people realize Its desires.

It is Great, though It does not insist on this.

Wise people aspire to It, to the Great!

35. All the Perfect Ones merge into Great Tao.

Follow this Path! By doing so you will not harm yourself, on the contrary, you will achieve calm, harmony, and the fullness of life.

I, in the state of *non-doing*, travel in the Infinity of Tao. One cannot convey this with words! Tao is the Most Subtle and Blissful!

36. Worldly passions make man weak. Resoluteness fills man with power!

Worldly passions cripple man. Resoluteness elevates man and strengthens the consciousness!

Worldly passions enslave man. Resoluteness makes man free!

That which is dispassionate, gentle, and yielding conquers that which is passionate, hard, and coarse!

37. Tao does not act directly in the world of matter.²¹ Yet, the entire Creation is a product of Its creativity.

Act in the same manner, and all the living will develop in a natural way!

When you live with simplicity, without paying attention to gossip and to hostile attitudes, and in harmony with Tao, then you come to the state when you have no attachments and passions!

The absence of worldly desires brings one to the state of inner calm, and then everything around comes in order.

38. Those representing Great Te do not force Themselves to do good deeds: behaving righteously is natural for Them.

Those who are far from Te may try to force themselves to perform good deeds: righteousness is not natural for them.

Those representing Great Te do not aspire to activity in the world of matter: They act in the state of *non-doing*.

Those who are far from Te live in vanity and act under the influence of their passions. In the religious aspect of life, their activity is reduced only to rituals, but believing in the “magic” of rituals signifies the degradation of religion! Also, such people force others to act like them.

This happens only to those who do not have Tao in their lives. They cannot be trusted. They have betrayed Tao and can betray anyone.

²¹ It is Te that acts.

The wise who have cognized Tao are capable of distinguishing people by these features. They choose to communicate only with people of goodness.

39. There are Those Who have been living in Unity with Tao since ancient times. Thanks to Them, the sky is pure and the earth is stable, nature is gentle and rivers are full of water, valleys are covered with flowers, all living beings multiply, and the heroes of the spiritual Path are paragons of virtue. All this is provided by Those Who Have Achieved the Unity!

If They did not help, then the sky would cease to be pure and the earth would crack all over, nature would cease giving its beauty to all the living, valleys would stop blooming and turn into deserts, all living beings would stop multiplying and disappear, and the heroes of the spiritual Path would not be paragons of virtue and would be ridiculed and banished...

People are a base for their rulers. Therefore, those earthly rulers who elevate themselves do not have a strong base. This happens because they do not consider people as their base. It is their mistake.

If you disassemble the chariot which you ride, what would you be left with?

Do not regard yourself as precious jasper! Be simple, as common stone!

40. The interaction of opposites is the sphere of Tao's activity.

The *Highest Subtlety* is one of the most important qualities of Tao. It is opposed by coarse qualities of evil people.

All the development of incarnate beings happens with the interaction of these opposites.

However, the world of matter originated from the *Subtlest Source*...

41. The wise, having learned about Tao, aspire to self-realization in It.

The unwise, having learned about Tao, sometimes remember about It and sometimes forget.

Foolish people, having learned about Tao, ridicule It. They regard Those who have cognized Tao as insane... They regard the wisdom as insanity..., the higher justice as vice..., the righteousness as depravity..., the great truth as false...

Yes, the great square has no corners, the great sound cannot be heard, the great image cannot be seen...

Yes, Tao is hidden from idle looks. It leads only those to Perfection who are worthy of it!

42. Once, One came out from Tao. He took with Himself Two others. Those Two took Three others. And They all began to create various forms of life on the planet.²²

All creatures are subdivided into pairs of the opposite – *yin* and *yang* – and are filled with the *chi* energy. All further development comes from their interactions.

Everyone is afraid of *loneliness* and views it as suffering. This concerns earthly rulers as well.

They care only about themselves and refuse to help others.

However, the correct decision is to dedicate oneself to *caring about others*, thereby forgetting about oneself.

Wise spiritual seekers, who dedicate their lives to the good of all, will not be conquered by death. I prefer these words to all the other precepts of all the sages!

Those Who have attained Tao are merged into *One* in It.

²² Lao Tse tells here about several Holy Spirits (Te) Who guided the evolution of souls on our planet.

43. It happens that the weakest defeat the strongest. The reason for this is that Te is present everywhere, pervades everything, and controls everything.

This is why I view *non-doing* as beneficial.

There is nothing in the world that can be compared, by its importance, to the teachings about the *inner quietness* and the benefit of *non-doing*!

44. What is more necessary: life or glory? What is more valuable: life or wealth? What hurts more: gain or loss?

If you accumulate much, you will lose much!

Show moderation and you will avoid failures. Show moderation and there will be no risk. Thus, you can live life in calm, without worries!

The one who shows moderation does not suffer failure. The one who knows when to stop avoids affliction. Thanks to this, such a person can manage to know Primordial and Eternal Tao.

45. People may confuse the Greatest Perfection with insanity, great volume with void, great curvature with straightness, great humor with foolishness, a great speaker with the one unable to speak.

Intense movement overcomes cold. Stillness overcomes heat.

Only calm and harmony can ensure the correct understanding of everything that happens in the world.

46. If a country lives according to the laws of Tao, then horses are used for tilling land.

But if a nation renounces Tao, then war-horses run in the fields.

There is no greater affliction than uncontrolled worldly passions! Nothing destroys man more than the desire to multiply worldly treasures!

Those who are satisfied with what they have are always happy!

47. The wise cognize the world without leaving home. Without looking from a window, they see Primordial Tao. To learn more, they do not need to travel far.

The wise do not travel, yet know everything. They do not look, yet can describe everything. They seem to be non-acting, yet achieve everything.

In *the heart*, they find everything that is necessary.²³

This is why the wise know the things which cannot be reached by walking. And they can see that which is invisible to the common eye.

48. They who learn increase their knowledge every day. They who serve Tao decrease their worldly desires. By constantly decreasing worldly desires, one can achieve *non-doing*.

Only in *non-doing* one can master all the mysteries of the universe! Without *non-doing*, one cannot achieve this.

49. The wise have no selfish motives. They live in caring about others.

To good people I do good, to the unkind I also wish good. This is the goodness of Te.

With honest people I am honest, with the dishonest I am also honest. This is the honesty of Te.

The wise live in calm in their country. Yet, in the same land, other people live: both good and evil, honest and dishonest, reasonable and foolish, selfish and selfless, those listening to Tao and those denying It.

²³ Here the author means not the physical but spiritual heart, developed through the methods of buddhi yoga to a large size. Inside this heart one cognizes Tao. From this heart one finds ways leading to other beings.

The wise view people as their children.

50. People are born on the Earth and die. Out of ten, about a third continue onto paradisiacal existence, a third go to hell by the path of death, and a third are those who have not succeeded in the development of the soul due to attachments to worldly affairs.

Those who have mastered the *true life* while living on the Earth are not afraid of rhinoceros or tigers, in the battle they are not afraid of armed soldiers. A rhinoceros has no place to plunge its horn into them, a tiger has no place to fasten its claws onto them, a soldier has no place to stab them with a sword. It is so because to them there is no death!²⁴

51. Tao creates beings, Te nurses them, raises them, helps them to develop, to mature, takes care of them and supports them.

These beings grow (as souls), develop, and achieve Perfection.

Therefore, there is no person who would not be obliged to worship Tao and Te.

Tao and Te coerce no one, They give to all beings the possibility to develop according to one's own freedom of will, in a natural way.

To produce without owning the products, to create without boasting, to be older than others and **yet** not command them, these are the principles of life of Great Te.

52. Everything in the material world has its Source, Which is the Mother of the material world.

²⁴ The one who has become a large spiritual heart (with the help of the methods of buddhi yoga) or has even merged with Tao, quite naturally feels oneself as non-corporeal. Such a person — as a large consciousness — cannot be wounded by animals or weapons. Such a One is Immortal.

When the Mother is cognized, it is easier to recognize Her Children²⁵.

Knowing the Children, one should not forget about the Mother. Then one lives life without troubles.

If one abandons personal desires and becomes free from worldly passions, then such a one lives without getting tired.

On the other hand, if one indulges in passions and becomes immersed in worldly affairs, then troubles are unavoidable.

To see the *Subtlest* is the true *clearness of vision*.

The preservation of the *subtlety of the consciousness* ensures true power.

Contemplate the Light of Tao! Cognize Its *Depths!* It is the true Treasure! Do not lose It, and you will avoid many troubles!

53. The one who possesses the true knowledge walks the Straight Path.

The only thing that I am afraid of is to be absorbed in vanity.

The Straight Path is absolutely even. Yet, people prefer... meandering trails.

If earthly rulers direct all their attention to the luxury of their palaces, then weeds overgrow fields and granaries become empty. Such earthly rulers wear luxurious clothes and sharp swords, they are not satisfied with simple food, they accumulate too much wealth for themselves. This is equal to a robbery and is a violation of the principles of life that are suggested by Tao.

54. By cognizing yourself, you cognize others. Help others, and you will cognize everything.

²⁵ Te.

The one who can stand firmly cannot be overturned. The one who can lean against a support cannot be knocked down. Yes, such a person will be remembered by descendants!

When you achieve a similar stability in Tao, you will shine on other people with Its Light like the rising sun!

Try to provide help in this to your family, to people living in your country and everywhere! By doing this you will gain great power of the consciousness!

How have I cognized it? By doing this...

55. Those who live in Mergence with Great Te are pure like newborn babies. Poisonous insects do not sting them, snakes do not bite them, wild animals and birds do not attack them. They have refined the consciousnesses and are firmly merged with Tao.

They evaluate people not by their gender or by other outer qualities, but by looking at people's essence: at the souls.

They also perceive others as integral parts of the *Whole*²⁶, in *Unity*.

And They possess the ability to initiate spiritual growth in people.

They can preach all day long without straining their voice because They stay in constant Mergence with Tao!

In this way, They live in happiness!

Common people, having reached the prime of life, immediately begin to fade in old age. It happens because they have not achieved Mergence with Tao.

56. The truth cannot be conveyed only through words! The one who does not understand this cannot fully understand this treatise!²⁷

²⁶ Of the Absolute. (More details can be found in [6]).

Those who abandon personal desires, become free from worldly passions, reduce personal needs, achieve clear understanding, do not aspire to glory, stay in the subtlest state of the consciousness represent Primordial and Deepest Tao.

They cannot be tempted, offended, forced, or persuaded to glorification. No one can harm Them!

They shine like the sun! They are like a source that everyone can drink from!

They are the Highest Treasure among people!

57. From Tao originates calm, harmony, and justice.

Yet, among people, there is selfishness, guile, falsity, violence...

One can enter Tao only through *non-doing*.

When people aspire to accumulation of a multitude of unnecessary things, they become poor spiritually.

When they produce too many weapons, then robbery and disorder unavoidably arise.

When crafty masters direct all their efforts at creating material valuables, then miraculous phenomena cease to happen in such a country.

When laws and repressions become too strict, then the number of unsatisfied people and opposition grows.

This is why the wise abandon vanity and let everything happen by itself.

One has to begin to change the world by changing oneself. If I aspire to quietness and calm, others become calm observing me. If I do not aspire to possessing many material boons, people around me begin to be satisfied with little. If I live without worldly attachments and pas-

²⁷ One can fully understand the truth only by realizing, in practice, everything that is described here.

sions, people around me come to simplicity and naturalness of life.

58. If earthly rulers rule in calm and harmony, people too are calm and peaceful. And they do not aspire to anything outside this wellbeing...

On the contrary, if earthly rulers act with irritation and aggressiveness, then people begin to suffer. Then wellbeing is replaced with troubles and calamities. And people begin to seek the way out, and some of them find it by coming to *non-doing* and becoming immersed into the Light of Infinite Tao. Thus luck and happiness may result from affliction.

As we can see, happiness and unhappiness give birth to each other...

The wise are always calm, gentle, and just. They do not want to take something away from others. They are selfless and do not harm anyone. They are honest and live in harmony with Tao, with nature, and with other people.

They are bright but do not glitter.

59. In order to serve Tao successfully by helping other people, one needs the ability to preserve and to accumulate the power of the consciousness. This requires renouncing everything that wastes this power.

Such a renunciation at the higher stages of the Path helps one to grow one's own *Power of Te*, which can become inexhaustible and can help one to cognize Tao completely.

And Tao is the Eternal and Infinite Primordial Foundation of every man and of the entire material world. The way that unites man with this Foundation is called *root*.

60. The activity of Tao and Te in relation to numerous individual souls of different ages can be likened to cooking a meal of many ingredients in a large cauldron.

For realization of the destinies of most people, which they deserve, Tao and Te use spirits, some of these spirits may be of lower levels of development.

But if one approaches Tao by the quality of the soul, then such a person goes beyond the sphere of influence of these spirits.

61. The Great Kingdom of Tao²⁸ is located as if behind the mouth of a river.

The *Ocean* is below all rivers, and all rivers flow into It.

The *Ocean* is calm and patient. It *waits* for Those approaching It and entering It.

The *Ocean* is a *Great Kingdom*. But on the Earth there are only small kingdoms composed of people.

The *Great Kingdom* takes care of satisfying all those who enter It.

So, let the rulers of small kingdoms take care that all their people be satisfied.

Then all people will receive everything that they want, both in the *Great Kingdom* and in the small kingdoms.

And let us remember that the Great always has to be below all.

62. Tao is the deepest Base of everything. It is the Treasure of those aspiring to It. But it also acknowledges the existence of evil people.

Yes, one has to preach to all people about purity and kind behavior. However, are not evil people necessary?

²⁸ In other terms – the Abode of the Creator.

They help one to cognize the ephemerality of worldly treasures and the illusiveness of hopes for eternally staying on the Earth in one's present body.

In interaction with them, people of goodness make efforts in changing themselves on the Path to Tao in order to become as far from evil as possible. After all, in order to become unreachable for evil, one must perform concrete actions on developing oneself as a consciousness...²⁹

Many people would not strive to become better if evil people did not "help" them!

Earthly rulers, who possess absolute power, and their servants value their jewelry and luxurious chariots. However in reality, they are not better than those living in solitude and calm and walking the *Deepest Path* to Tao! Wouldn't it be better for those earthly rulers to start leading a calm life and to dedicate it to cognition of Tao?

People say that in ancient times no one aspired to worldly wealth, and criminals were not executed. In those ancient times, people worshipped Tao...

63. Rid yourself of the vanity of the mind and unnecessary deeds, keep calm, and be satisfied with simple food!

Thus one begins walking the Path towards cognition of Great Tao, Which is *the One Whole* consisting of many Great Souls.

There are also many small souls that get incarnated in bodies.

Having cognized this, the wise know that one should requite hatred with good.

²⁹ Such examples are given in [5,18].

Start difficult work with an easy beginning. Every great work consists of small components. In this way—gradually—one fulfills great tasks.

If someone promises to perform great work quickly, such a person cannot be trusted...

But the wise never start “great undertakings” in the world of matter! This is why they can perform great work in the spiritual world. It is not hard for them.

64. It is easy to help those who have mastered harmony.

It is easy to show the way to a seeker who has not found it yet. However, one has to remember that a weak person can easily fall off the Path. The one who is a weak soul will run away from difficulties.

It is better to begin constructing where you do not need to destroy old walls. It is better to introduce spiritual knowledge where you are not attacked by angry and foolish people.

And then, a great tree grows from a small sapling, a nine-story tower begins to be constructed from a handful of earth, a journey of a thousand li begins with one step.

In the world of matter, entrepreneurs go bankrupt, owners of property lose it. This is why the wise do not act like this and thus do not suffer failures. They possess nothing and thus have nothing to lose.

The wise do not live in worldly passions, do not strive to gain something material that requires much effort. They live in natural simplicity and are satisfied with what is refused by other people.

They walk the Path to Tao.

65. Those who have cognized Tao do not show off in front of the ignorant. They also refuse to “rule the crowd”, and therefore they can continue personal development and helping deserving people.

Confidential higher knowledge about the methods of the development of the consciousness can be harmful to people who are not ready to receive it.

The wise, who know about this and act according to this knowledge, become examples for others.

Thus acts Great Te.

In order to understand this, one has to recognize that Great Te is the Opposite of evil people. For such people, Great Te is located at an unreachable distance.

This is what Great Te is! It possesses the Highest Power and takes care of all the multitude of living beings! It unites and separates people, It controls everything! It is the Ruler deserving the strongest love and respect!

By learning from It, you will achieve the highest wellbeing!

66. Great rivers are so powerful because they flow down into the sea, accumulating in themselves water from the entire neighborhood.

The wise who desire to help people have to put themselves below others. This is why despite being superior, they are not a burden to people, and people do not harm them. People gladly follow them and do not turn away from them.

They do not compete with anyone, and therefore they are unconquerable.

They constantly advance further, yet people do not envy them.

They do not struggle against anyone, and thus no one in the whole world can force them to act against their will.

67. Tao is Great and has no equals or anything similar to It!

It resides so *deeply* and is so *subtle* that no one can catch It or force It to do something!

I possess three treasures which I value: the first is benevolence, the second is frugality, and the third is that I am not ahead of others. I am benevolent, thus I can be brave. I am frugal, thus I can be generous. I am not ahead of others, thus I can be a wise leader.

The one who is brave without love, generous without frugality, who tries to be ahead of others and pushes others away, such a person suffers failure.

On the contrary, the one who is full of love achieves victory and becomes unconquerable because Tao constantly guards such a person.

68. A wise leader is never bellicose. A wise soldier never gets angry. The one who can win does not attack first. The one who can lead people does not humiliate them but puts oneself in a lower position.

Such are the laws of Te that reject anger, self-praise, and violence. This is the way of acting of Those Who represent Te and guide people to Primordial and Eternal Tao.

69. Military art teaches: I do not begin first, I have to wait. I do not advance even an inch, but rather retreat a foot. This is called acting without action, winning without violence. In this case, I have no enemies, thus, I can avoid wasting power.

There is no affliction worse than hating enemies! Hatred towards enemies is the path leading to the loss of the most important – Tao!

Therefore, those who avoid battles come out victorious.

70. My words are easy to understand and to realize. Yet, many people cannot understand them and cannot realize them.

Behind my words, there is the *Origin* of everything. But those people do not know It, thus they do not understand me.

The one who has cognized Tao is quiet and unnoticeable, though behaves with dignity. Such a person wears simple clothes and hides the treasure³⁰ within.

71. The one who possesses knowledge and keeps silence about it is honorable.

The one who has no knowledge, yet pretends knowing,... is not healthy.

Those who are wise heal themselves. The wise never fall ill because they rid themselves of the causes of illnesses. They abide in Tao. How can they be ill then?

72. The one who lives with fear cannot become strong. The strength of the consciousness can only be gained if one lives without fear.

Also, rid yourself of the ability to despise others! The one who despises others is despicable in front of Tao!

Rid yourself of violence in relations with others! The one who does violence to others will be subjected to violence.

Renounce the ability to deceive people! The one who deceives others deceives oneself.³¹

Live in love!

Do not strive to show yourself off! The one who has cognized one's own Higher Essence is not engaged in self-admiration and does not elevate oneself above others.

The one who has gotten rid of egocentrism gains an opportunity to achieve Tao.

³⁰ Wisdom.

³¹ Because such a person does not take into account God and His principles of the formation of people's destinies.

73. The one who is brave and bellicose will be killed. The one who is brave but is not bellicose will live.

What is the reason for disliking bellicose people? Even a sage has difficulty explaining it.

Great Tao abides in calm, It does not fight against anyone. It wins without violence.

Great Tao is silent, yet It answers questions and comes to those who call It.

In calm, Great Tao controls everything.

Great Tao selects worthy people for Itself.

74. It makes no sense to threaten to kill a person who is not afraid of death.

But the one who threatens others with death and takes pleasure in this will be destroyed.

The theme of life and death is under the control of Tao alone. No one is allowed to control it instead of Tao! The one who decides to do such a thing only harms oneself.

75. Looking at the majority of people, one may think that they are constantly hungry. They are always concerned with accumulation and multiplication of their supplies. They cannot stop in this activity!

In all affairs, they aspire only to personal profit, by any means!

They do not understand the principles of life suggested by Tao: about loving others and caring about them, about *non-doing*.

They live not looking at Tao, ignoring Tao, wasting their life power for doing things which have no true value. They have a too strong “love for life”, and therefore they die too early.

On the contrary, those who neglect their earthly lives for the sake of everyone's good increase the value of their lives before Tao.

76. The body of man at birth is gentle and lithe, but after death it becomes hard. All vegetal beings too are gentle and lithe at birth, and after death they become dry and easily broken.

A powerful tree either breaks in a storm or is cut down by an axe. A lithe and gentle tree has an advantage here.

The one who is gentle and lithe walks the path of life. The one who is not gentle and lithe walks the path of death.

77. Let the Life of Primordial Tao be an example for us!

The one who does violence to people, who humiliates and robs them opposes Tao.

But the one who never acts selfishly, who gives one's own surplus to others, who performs deeds not for the sake of glory, who lives with calm, without worldly passions, who submerges into the tender and subtle calm of Tao and helps deserving people on this Path, such a person becomes similar to Tao.

78. Water is gentle and yielding. Yet, it destroys the hard. Nothing compares to it in overcoming the hard.

Gentle and tender overcome hard and coarse. Only wise people understand the essence of this statement...

79. Big emotional resentment has consequences. Calm can be regarded as goodness.

Therefore, the wise give an oath not to condemn anyone.

Kind people live in accordance with this rule; evil people do not.

Primordial Tao is always on the side of kind people.

80. About the state structure, I think the following:

It is good if a country is small and its population is rare.

Even if there are many weapons, they should not be used. War ships and chariots should not be used either. Warriors should not wage war.

One has to make life in a country such that people do not want to leave this country.

It is good if everyone has good food, beautiful clothes, cozy houses, and a joyful life.

It is good to look with love at neighboring states, to listen to how cocks crow there and dogs bark.

It is good if people who have reached old age cognize Perfection and leave this world so that they do not need to return here again.

81. True words are not necessarily exquisite. Beautiful words are not necessarily trustable.

The kind are not necessarily eloquent. The eloquent are not necessarily kind.

They who know do not argue. And they who do not know argue.

The wise are not selfish, they act for the good of others.

Great Tao takes care of the good of all living beings. Everything that It does towards living beings does not contain violence and does not harm anyone.

The wise also act without violence and do not harm anyone.

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